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be used exclusively for either group, and in fact there was considerable overlapping between them. 622 631

We begin with the text by Cibambo which emphasises the hierarchy of office-bearers in the northern kingdom in pre-European days and illustrates the correlation between the courts and the political administration. 645

¶ The former government of the Ngoni was based on the following:

(1) Above all was the one called *Inkosi* or *UBaba*, because they thought of him as the father of the country, the head.

(2) After him came the *iziinduna*. Sometimes these were two or perhaps four. These were very highly honoured and the Paramount feared them greatly: he called them *Bababa* and their words had great weight with him. They were the ones who gave advice to the Paramount and if any grave matter arose he called them to hear what they thought. The Paramount in his village had also his old men who helped him with everything small that did not need to go to the *iziinduna*. If there was word that the Paramount was meeting with the *iziinduna* he first of all met with the old men and asked for advice to place before the *iziinduna*. And these old men had the right to speak when the Paramount took counsel with the *iziinduna*.

(3) After the *iziinduna* came the *amakosana*, or lesser chiefs. These were perhaps the younger brothers of the ruling Paramount, and had their districts under him. They also had their *iziinduna* and were responsible for their own districts. When the Paramount met with the *iziinduna*, the *amakosana* were also there if it was considered fitting.

(4) Then there were the *akosana*. These were over villages or smaller districts. Their villages were called *amakanda* (heads) and they had power in their small districts to carry out the laws and they looked to the *iziinduna* for instructions.

(5) Lastly the old men (*madala*) who wore the head-ring (*idlindlo*) but not all of them; only those who had good sense and understood the ways of the tribe. [388]

All these five divisions had their share in the government of the country. If there was a great court of justice, all these were to be found at it, and took part in the discussions. If fresh matter arose, or new laws, these delivered them to their villages. Also there were men called *amaxosa*, messengers. These were men chosen to run with messages from the Paramount to the *iziinduna* or *amakosana*, to go with and return with news. Almost every village or little district had its chosen messengers. All the types (2), (3) and (4) had their messengers. When anything happened, the messenger in the village of the Paramount made a general proclamation and called the *amaxosa* together. When the *amaxosa* had heard the message they scattered throughout all the country. So in the districts and by this way news travelled very quickly. [202]

In the central kingdom one of the big *iziinduna* explained the change in their system which occurred after crossing the Zambesi: 178 622 631

¶ When the Ngoni were coming from the south they chose lesser chiefs and *iziinduna* from the *amakosana*, who were the Paramount's brothers, 645

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of an *ngoma* 'competition' the team was made up of lads and girls of about fourteen to eighteen years old. They went off to another village, having announced their arrival previously, and challenged the 'home team' to dance *ngoma*. The dancing was in the kraal with the adults looking on and acting as judges. It was all very decorous and orderly and the competing teams were in dead earnest. As we have noticed already, the Ngoni danced without drums. The steady beat of the feet of the young men made the rhythm for the dance, but the co-ordination in the long lines of boys in front and girls behind needed assiduous practice to produce harmonious results. In both northern and central Nguniland the Paramounts had forbidden all dances except Ngoni dances, and in the north the *ngoma* was encouraged by the chiefs because it was considered a 'good dance' for young people.

After marriage, the young women were absorbed in the care of their huts and young children and only appeared as an age set when they took part in a communal hoeing; on such occasions they were inclined to keep apart from the older women, sometimes on the grounds that they did not drink the full-strength beer, and therefore clustered round a pot of 'sweet' beer when they knocked off work. In most Ngoni villages the young men after marriage went off to find work and, as a group of friends within an age set, they would get together to talk things over, make their preparations and travel to the south.

In day-to-day village affairs, as well as on ceremonial occasions, the age sets of the *mamina* and *madoda* were very much in evidence. The *madoda* met at meal-times by the gate of the kraal, and they went there to count the cattle when they came back in the evening. The same group could be seen either at the kraal gate or on a verandah talking about village affairs or drinking together, or at a court listening to cases. The *mamina* usually gathered in the verandah of the *indlunkulu* to talk over women's affairs or to receive guests. As an age set they met less frequently than the men because the larger part of their tasks lay in their own huts or in the group of women associated with a house. On all occasions when the formal reception of strangers took place, or when ritual feasting or shaving or washing occurred, or when important decisions had to be made, the *mamina* and the *madoda* in their separate sets were in evidence.

Although the age sets in village life were social units carrying definite responsibilities and performing recognized activities, their chief importance in Ngoni social life was in regulating behavioural patterns and prescribing mutual relationships. Here we have to take note of a selective principle at work among the *mamina* and *madoda*. Although in one sense all women and men of forty to forty-five and upwards belonged to these age sets, the individuals who carried out the characteristic activities of these groups did not include all the men and women of that age. The very old people did not continue to exercise any influence in village

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affairs unless they were exceptionally vigorous mentally and physically, or the kind of dominating personality who could not be overlooked. It was evident also that individuals of weak character or evil disposition were not included in the group. I saw one or two such persons who bore a bad reputation in village society turned away from a senior group which was talking over a difficult village affair, with the caustic comment: 'Who is that worthless one? We cannot know him.' On the other hand, on social occasions when food or beer was being dispensed, all the old ones and the less reputable ones would be given their share, though sometimes with a cutting remark about the people who never missed a party but never did any work.

Selection in the senior age sets was intended to show that only persons who could be trusted, that is who were of known good character, were qualified to supervise the growing up of boys and girls, for whom the village elders as a group felt responsible. The maintenance of Ngoni standards of behaviour in young people was in the hands of this older group, who could and did exercise authority over and above that of the family and house. There were no more ardent supporters of Ngoni behaviour patterns than some of the older men and women of Ntumba clans in the central kingdom who had been brought up in the houses of Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans, and were recognized as *mamina* and *madoda* in their villages.

Among the younger people below the group of elders, it was common to hear them address each other as *ntanga yami*, or *manonga*, 'my age mate'. Boys shouted it at each other on the cattle ground, young women called to each other in those terms when pounding maize, and when on a visit as an *ngoma* dance team it was a frequent form of address among the youths and girls. There was inherent in that form of address an ease of relationship, an absence of seniority or inferiority, and an acknowledgement of a tie which went beyond that of the family or house or clan. It was most commonly used within a village, but it was sometimes used between young people of different villages.

Within these groups of youths and girls and among young married men and women, there was a recognized friendship relation, *cibwenzi*, which existed as a rule between pairs of individuals of the same sex and age. It was sometimes a continuation of a playmate companionship; sometimes an expression of the need of a young boy in a *lumsi* or a young married woman for a confidante or sympathizer. Most often it was a spontaneous specialised liking for another person, expressed invariably through an exchange of small gifts and generally of confidences, and often by going off together to bathe or cut firewood or catapult small birds. Such friendships were said as a rule to be permanent, though girls and women sometimes referred contemptuously to someone as 'She was my friend. Now she hates me and does not give me anything.' The decision to go off in search of work was often taken

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
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888 [222] Yet the position of the old women of the village was a highly honoured one. The mother of the headman was almost more powerful than her son. And we always take good care when we enter a new village to win the kindly favour of the old grandmother first of all. Then we are sure we have found a way to the son's heart. One of the most beautiful things in our tribal life is the honour which is paid to the grey hairs of the village. The best and helpless old men who lived through the glorious fighting [623] days, and understand all precedent and etiquette are the judges and councillors. And no case can be tried, no decision can be made, until the old men give their presence and their opinion. It is hard when the young are leaping ahead of their fathers through education to maintain this veneration for the elders. Yet it is the very backbone of the tribe. There is nothing more contemptible than an African or an Asiastic with a veneer of education who affects to despise the elders of the village. But I know no more pathetic sight than our afternoon schools where grey-haired men and women may be seen peering through faded eyes trying also to learn to read and keep abreast of the young and alert life, while the sun goes down in their eventide.

233 [181] The Ngoni were first of all a fighting people, and then a pastoral. Their land affords splendid pasture for cattle. And they take great pride in their herds. Round the cattle kraal centre all their ambitions, and highest delights, and best intelligence. They sit and watch the cattle going out in the early morning and coming in in the evening, and know every spot and colour of their beautiful animals. The quietest and most peaceful sight I know is when the sun goes down, and the fierce heat has [534] given place to the welcome cool of the evening. Then you will hear the music of reed pipes, and looking up you see a long line [513] of sleek, solemn cows, with large silken dew laps, and fat humps, slowly coming up the village path lowing for their calves, while boys ride on their backs sitting or standing upright, balancing themselves carefully and blowing on their pipes. Before and behind them runs a troop of goats and sheep bleating with such a human cry. In a moment the village is alive—sheep and goats are chased back and forward till they find the huts where they sleep with their masters. And boys run out with wooden pails [234] into which they milk what the calves have not sucked from their mothers.